

Thayer Memorial Library

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Collection Development Policy upholds the mission of the Thayer Memorial Library (“Library”), which brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and build community. The Library respects an individual’s freedom of conscience to hold or consider a fact, viewpoint, or thought independent of others’ views. The Library respects the agency of individuals to decide for themselves or their families what is appropriate to read, watch or listen to.

Support for Intellectual Freedom

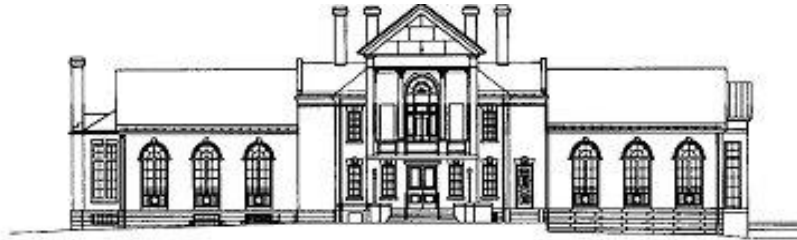
The Library provides an equitable space in which individuals and their pursuits are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge, beliefs, and opinions. The Board of Trustees of the Thayer Memorial Library (“Trustees”) affirms the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to View, and Freedom to Read policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections.

Objectives

The Library’s materials collection is developed and managed to meet the preponderance of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the residents of the Town of Lancaster and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Library staff builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations. Collection decisions are made in conjunction with strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- Positioning the Library as the preferred partner for lifelong learning
- Embracing diversity of ideas
- Developing Library services that incorporate both physical and virtual collections
- Committing to excellence in service to improve effectiveness and remove barriers
- Public Library Responsibility for Selection



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Responsibility for Selection

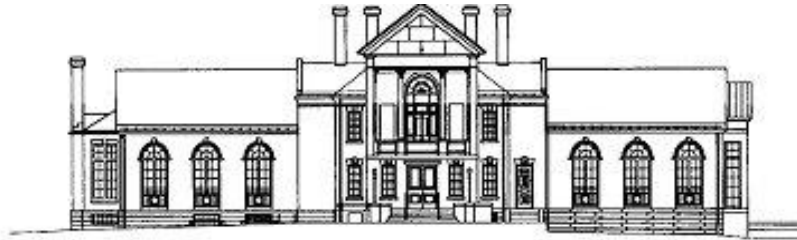
Staff contributes to the development of patron-oriented collections by:

- Engaging in open, continuous two-way communication with Library patrons and recognizing that individuals have different ways of expressing their needs based on age, language, economic status, culture, or other characteristics
- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy the diverse needs of Library users
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement
- Reviewing the collection regularly to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

Selection Criteria

The Library represents a broad demographic. With a patron base that can include infants to the elderly, selection criteria consider the various interests and needs of Lancaster residents.

The Library provides collections containing various material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, the Library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. The Library's collections will provide a range of opinions on current issues.



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Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on the subject matter or political, religious, or ideological grounds.

In building collections, the Library staff is guided by the principle of selection rather than censorship. Furthermore, selecting a title for the Library's collections should not be interpreted as endorsing a particular viewpoint.

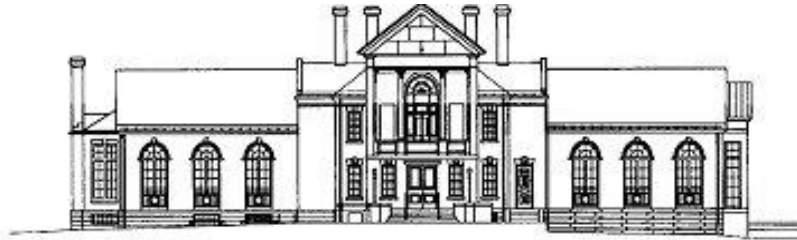
To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be acceptable.

General Criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for Library use
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Potential user appeal
- Requests by Library patrons

Content Criteria:

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity
- Consideration of the work as a whole

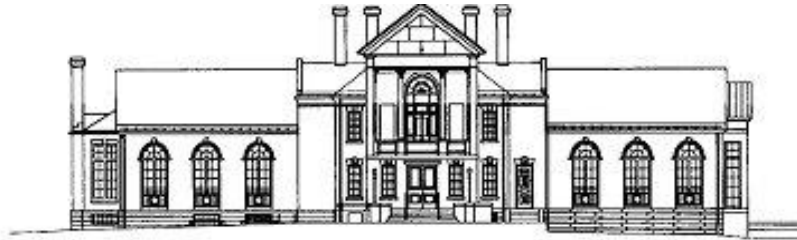


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- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information
- Effective characterization
- The authenticity of history or social setting

Special Considerations for Electronic Information Sources:

- Ease of use of the product
- Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users
- Equipment needed to provide access to the information
- Technical support and training
- Availability of the physical space needed to house and store the information or equipment
- Available in full text



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Selection of Materials on Controversial Topics

A balanced collection aspires to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as the availability of materials, space, and budget allows. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the Library's collection.

The Library contains materials that some patrons may find objectionable. The Library may omit the collection materials that some patrons feel are important. In either case, the Library has procedures that patrons may use in requesting the reconsideration of materials.

Gifts and Donations

Accepting gifts and donations is a valuable way for the Library to benefit from the generosity of the community it serves. Gifts and donations of materials are reviewed using the same criteria as purchases.

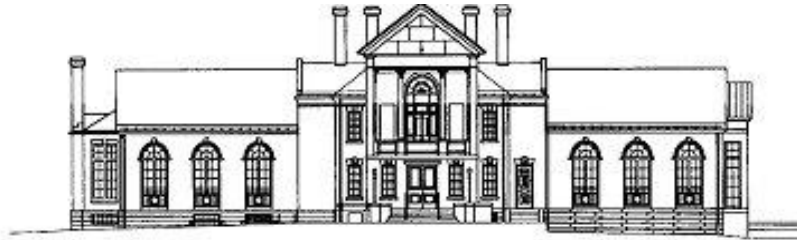
The Library reserves the right to dispose of any gifts that are given to the Library. The Library will best incorporate such materials into the existing collections. Materials not added to Library collections may be used for programs or given to other local organizations such as schools, senior centers, or Friends of the Library.

Gifts received by the Library that are not added to the Library's collection shall be forwarded to the Friends of the Library for their disposition at a future sale. Any items unsold by the Friends of the Library may be donated to another organization or discarded.

Funds may be given to acquiring materials recommended by Library staff as prescribed in this policy or for purchasing specific items suggested by the donor. When the Library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, the Library staff shall make the selection with the general selection principles outlined in this policy.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding Policy

The Library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its decisions on several factors, including publishing date, circulation frequency, community interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials. Items dealing with local history are an exception, as are absolute classics and award-winning children's books. Fiction that was once popular but no



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longer in demand and non-fiction books that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection,

Withdrawn books may well be donated to the Friends of the Library for book sales. The proceeds from such sales are used for the benefit of the Library. Books that are not sold will be disposed of at the discretion of the Friends of the Library.

Reconsideration Policy

The Library fully endorses the principles documented in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. Materials available in the Library present diverse viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy.

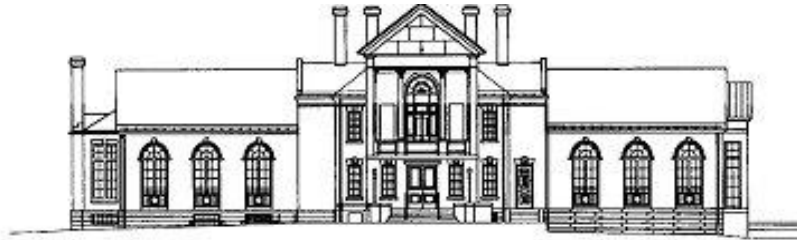
The Library also selects a wide variety of materials that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The Library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The Library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all of the collection will appeal to everyone.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the Library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a Library supervisor or the Director. If the patron is not satisfied with the response to their request, the Library staff will provide the patron with information and a form to request formal reconsideration of the Library resource.

Informal Complaints

The process may begin with staff discussing the complaint with the patron, which will be directed to the Director or their representative. During that interaction, the Director or their representative will discuss the nature of media selection and refer to the Collection Development Policy.

Library staff should, as needed offer to assist the patron in finding alternate materials that would better meet the needs and interests of the patron and their family members. If the patron chooses to go forward with the challenge, the complainant should be provided with a request for a formal reconsideration form.



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Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints

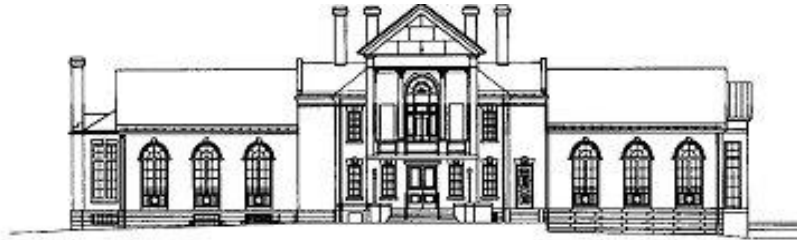
The following steps will be used when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a Library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the Library collection.

A concerned patron dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials that includes the Library's mission statement, selection policy, reconsideration form, and the Library Bill of Rights.

Patrons are required to complete and submit a reconsideration form to the Director. They, with appropriate staff, will review the reconsideration form and the material in question to consider whether its selection follows the criteria stated in the collection policy.

Within 30 days, the Director will make a decision and send a letter to the concerned person who requested the reconsideration, stating the reasons for the decision. If the individual is unsatisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within ten business days to the Trustees. If the Board plans to address the appeal at their Board meeting, the individual will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held.

The Trustees reserve the right to limit the length of public comments. The decision of the Board is final.



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Sample Letter to Complainant

Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in the Library. Selecting materials that serve the needs of our community is a vital part of operating a Library. The Board of Trustees takes this responsibility very seriously and has established a materials selection policy for selecting resources and a detailed reconsideration procedure for requesting reconsideration of particular items. I have enclosed both for your review. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss them further.

If you are still concerned after you review the material public Library policies, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. The steps that will be taken are outlined in the Reconsideration procedure. At any point during this process, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Library Director

Date